

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2019

The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Secretary Ross and Attorney General Barr:

We write to express our deep concern over the continued efforts to add a citizenship question to the Decennial Census. As has been stated by President Trump and Attorney General Barr, and widely reported in the media, the Administration continues to seek the addition of a citizenship question.

Particularly troubling is the apparent consideration of an executive order to achieve what could not stand up to the scrutiny of the United States Supreme Court. The notion that the Administration is seeking a new rationale to add a citizenship question after Chief Justice Roberts characterized its previous position as “contrived” is deeply disturbing. It strains credulity that the Administration could come up with a new rationale that wouldn’t be similarly flawed and disingenuous at this late date.

So much relies on an accurate accounting of those present in our nation during the Decennial Census. From the proper apportionment of Congressional seats to the accurate allocation of federal funding to investment and other business decisions — the nation relies on the data collected. The accuracy of this data would be undermined if response rates are depressed through the addition of a question pertaining to citizenship. This makes the Administration’s continued attempts to find a new rationale for a citizenship question even more cynical.

As such, we ask that you immediately cease consideration of an executive order or any other means of adding a citizenship question and instead take all necessary steps to ensure an on-time Decennial Census.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator